

VZCZCXRO3728
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3708/01 3141212
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101212Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4281
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003708

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID PREL I2

SUBJECT: DR. CHALABI'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

REF: BAGHDAD #3565

¶1. SUMMARY: Only three weeks have passed since the surprise announcement naming Dr. Ahmed Chalabi as chair of a new Baghdad services committee. Since that time, the committee has met weekly, had open discussions and come to several conclusions. Implementation of the committee's recommendations is on hold until Prime Minister Maliki signs the executive order authorizing Chalabi's committee. The PM announced at the I-ESC on November 9 that he would sign the order. END SUMMARY.

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Draft Executive Order Not Yet Signed
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¶2. The draft executive order authorizing Chalabi's Committee designates Dr. Ahmed Chalabi as the President. Members include the Deputy National Security Advisor, Secretary of the Defense Ministry, Commander of Baghdad Operations and the Baghdad Governor and Mayor. Deputy Ministers include the Deputy Minister of Interior, Finance, Oil, Health, Electricity, Trade and Transportation. All members are to have the "acting and binding" authority of their respective Ministers.

¶3. Under the draft executive order, the committee is required to coordinate with the Baghdad Governorate and is explicitly authorized to work with "others" as needed. All ministries and entities not linked to a ministry are required to cooperate with the committee to achieve its tasks, including financial allocation management.

¶4. The committee can issue directives that lead to a solution of any problem pertaining to the delivery of services. It is granted the authority to prioritize service delivery, paying particular attention to areas where previously displaced persons are returning. Finally, the committee is permitted to receive essential service complaints from citizens.

¶5. The committee is tasked with diagnosing and defining problems that limit the provision of services. The committee is to draft an execution plan, submit periodic reports and create an assessment mechanism to measure the committee's performance, as well as the outcomes of its recommendations.

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Committee Forges Ahead, Better Organized and Well Attended
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¶6. On Tuesday, November 6, Dr. Ahmed Chalabi chaired his weekly services committee meeting. The committee reviewed minutes from the previous meeting and then proceeded to follow a formalized agenda. Attendees included; Ra'ad Muhsin Al-Harith, Senior Deputy, Ministry of Electricity; Dr. 'Adil Muhsin Abdullah, Inspector General, Ministry of Health; Dr. 'Isam Namiq 'Abdullah, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health; Mr. Na'im 'Ad'udh Al-Ka'bi, Deputy, Amanat Baghdad; Mrs. 'In'am Salih, Baghdad Governorate Councilwoman; Major General 'Adnan Qasim, Armed Forces General, Commander Office; Saleh Sarhan Al-khuza'i, Ministry of Defense; Mr. Sa'ad Kubbah, Secretariat, I-ESC; Mo'tasim Akram, Deputy Minister, Ministry of

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Oil; Dr. Nihad Abbas, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education; Abdul-Razzak Hassan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transportation; and Dr. Fadhil Nabi Othman, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance. The Iraqi Red Crescent was also represented by Dr. Sa'id Hakki, the President.

¶17. Health discussions led the way again, with the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Isam Namiq 'Abdullah, arguing that mobile hospitals were not needed in Baghdad, despite the previous suggestion from the Inspector General of Health. The committee sided with the Deputy Minister and will not further pursue mobile hospitals. The Ministry of Defense requested that Al Karkh Hospital be designated for MoD and MoI staff and employees. A debate followed between the MoH and MoD regarding whether the entire hospital was needed or just a designated wing. Chalabi instructed MoD and MoH to work together to resolve this issue as well as determine hospital staffing. They are to report findings next week to the committee.

¶18. The Amanat asked for more fuel, noting that current low fuel supplies inhibited the provision of services. They also asked for emergency street lighting. Chalabi requested that the Amanat and MoE form a subcommittee to discuss emergency lighting and report back to the committee. The Amanat did announce that they wanted to establish a "Clean Up Day" or even a "Clean Up Week."

¶19. Ra'ad Muhsin Al-Harith, Senior Deputy, from the MoE maintained that provincial defiance of load shedding continued to trouble the national grid. The militias and gangs are reportedly the real problem, threatening MoE employees if they do comply with load shedding. No solution was offered to this problem, but the MoD did note that a squadron was currently being assembled to provide protection to MoE employees when repairing downed and interdicted lines. MoE also reported again on the 10amp meters project. 65,000 households will have these amp boxes by the end of December. The MoE intends to purchase digital amps next year and install them in nearly 900,000 residences. The MoE reports that the specifications

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are complete and they are preparing to put this project out for bid.

¶10. The Ministry of Oil representative noted that Baghdad was heavily dependent upon the Doura refinery and imports. Doura's production capacity is limited due to insufficient supplies of crude oil. According to the MoO representative, the Strategy of Integrity Commission was addressing opportunities to import more crude. A recommendation was offered to transport crude from Kirkuk to Doura by tanker trucks. The previous suggestion to explore alternative transport for fuel was noted, but no final recommendation was made. Lastly, the MoO recommended that fuel production and distribution be privatized to reduce corruption. Chalabi requested a special session with the MoO to discuss the myriad of issues. No date was set.

¶11. Commerce, education and transportation were on the agenda, but were postponed to next week due to time constraints.

Comment

¶12. In the course of three weeks, Dr. Chalabi's committee has gone from marginally well-informed brainstorming to a fairly organized and well planned meeting. Formal minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. The committee prepared and followed an agenda and presenters were prepared to discuss their relevant issue areas.

¶13. A common theme running throughout these meetings is Dr. Chalabi's insistence for a specific request or recommendation. He is continually challenging the committee members to ask him for a deliverable. Once the committee has agreed to a recommendation, it will be presented to the Prime Minister for final resolution.

¶14. Two key steps to this process remain unclear. First, from where the committee members will derive their information or requests. As evidenced this week, a recommendation from a previous meeting was

challenged by the same Ministry that offered it, albeit a different representative. Secondly, it is still not clear what PM Maliki will do with the recommendations made by Chalabi's services committee.

¶115. Nevertheless, with 2008, "The Year of Services," right around the corner, it is hopeful that the GoI is revisiting its institutions and leaders responsible for the delivery of services to the people of Iraq. Hopefully this process will allow for the emergence of not only short-term solutions, but long-term institution building.

Crocker